

Preparation Needed to Survive Severe Weather

Basic severe weather preparedness plans must include:

- 1) *A thorough knowledge of safety rules*
- 2) *Selection and designation of the best shelter available*
- 3) *A reliable method of receiving warning information*
- 4) *Proper instructions for each person to follow when a watch or warning is issued or if threatening weather*

Preparing for severe weather is the theme of Severe Weather Awareness Week, so how do we go about it? Preparedness plans come in all sizes as dictated by individual and collective needs, but it always comes down to the individual. Do you know the basic safety rules? Would your children know what to do if home alone? Are plans ready to move elderly or disabled people to shelter quickly? What is your best source for obtaining warning information?

Your local emergency management agency, the National Weather Service, or your local American Red Cross chapter can help you with your planning. Severe weather safety information is available upon request.

rules of the game

A **Watch** means that **conditions are favorable** for severe thunderstorm or tornado development. **This is the time to prepare.** You should keep alert by listening to radio, television, or weather radio for the latest weather information. Know where your children are. Be aware of where you will go and what you will do if a severe thunderstorm or a tornado threatens.

A **Warning** means a severe thunderstorm or tornado **has been sighted or indicated by radar.** People in the path of the storm should take immediate life saving actions.

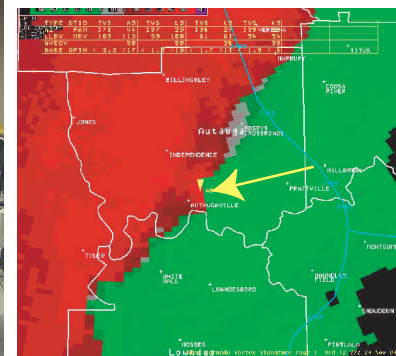
Watch and Warning

The primary mission of the National Weather Service is to warn of impending hazardous weather. Storm spotter reports, and radar/satellite data help, but severe weather can and does develop undetected. Advance warning time is often only a few minutes and may be only a few seconds.

Fortunately, the warning system continues to get better. Improvements in Doppler radars and computer systems have helped to detect weather phenomena over small areas in shorter periods of time. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) has sped up the distribution of warnings. An improved NOAA Weather Radio network has allowed nearly everyone to receive the most current weather broadcasts. But all of these efforts will fail if you do not know what to do or where to go! Everyone needs the knowledge to react quickly and a plan of action when severe weather materializes.



National Weather Service Birmingham Operations Area



Radar indicated tornado near Autaugaville (Autauga County) November 24, 2004

The National Weather Service has issued a Tornado Warning for...

Preparedness is the key in dealing with any weather hazard!